7: Janlekha X-4,5 (1948-1953)1956 AO7 Central Thai
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thus set a new stage -- the development of the natural resources of the whole region.

This change-over from a subsistence economy to a commercial economy involved the large-scale expansion of traditional crops or the development of new commercial crops. It was stimulated by the introduction or expansion of a money economy, the flow of capital and the development of land and sea transport. It was supported by Western technology, methods of administration and systems of justice. This whole process greatly affected the traditional institution, upsetting the balance of a medieval world. The free, individualist spirit of Western rule and commerce cut at the roots of traditional social life, undermining the corporate strength of family and village. But the most serious direct threat of the new economic forces was to the peasant's ownership of land. Expanding economies, new money taxes and cheap imports meant better business than ever for the money lender. Many peasants became ruined by debt and lost their lands. Indebtedness and debt slavery were not new in Southeast Asia; the latter was fairly soon stamped out, but the former now became much more widespread than before, resulting in the creation of a landless proletariat.[16]

Characteristics of Current Southeast Asian Economy

In spite of all the differences among the countries of Southeast Asia in the natural environment, ethnic

16. Harrison, op. cit., p. 210.